

Silver Banner

Fall 2009

Issue 69

Editor: Susan Jacobs

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Hilltown Assoc. of Councils on Aging is to provide and promote programs, activities and services to the senior citizens of the hill town communities of Becket, Dalton, and Peru.

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DALTON COMMUNITY EXPO

Looking for employment? For ways to help make ends meet? Know someone who is?

Mark your calendar to attend the **DALTON COMMUNITY EXPO** on Tuesday, October 20th from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Dalton Community House, 400 Main Street.

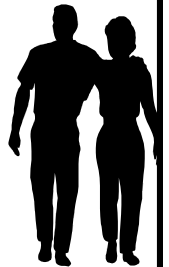
Many people are wondering if they will have to choose between rent, food, heat and medicine. If this describes you or some you know..... **You don't have to make a choice!** Town, county and state agencies want you to know there is a "safety net" to help.

Information will be available on the following: Fuel Assistance; Medical Insurance Enrollment and Health Screening; Food Assistance; Food Pantries and Hot Meals; Bill Paying; Health Ques-

tions; Tax Relief; Fuel Conservation; Home Weatherization; Child Care; Elder Care; Emergency Shelter; Winter Activities and Social Events; Awareness of Scams; Home Safety; Tips on Keeping Warm this Winter; Employment.

This is an opportunity to look into and apply for many of these programs, so be prepared and bring necessary verifications such as income, address, etc.

Sponsoring agencies include (in alphabetical order) the Dalton Clergy Assoc., Dalton CRA, Dalton COA, Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc., Rep. Denis Guyer, Western Massachusetts Electric and WIC (Women, Infants and Children).



Crafts—Collectibles—White Elephant Sale

**Saturday, September 5, 2009
8 AM to 4 PM (Rain or Shine)
Dalton CRA**

***Treasures, Hand Crafts, Quilt Raffle, Organic Produce,
Mums, Food Sale***

***Come to have fun and to support community groups
For information, call the Dalton CRA at 684-0260***

HILLTOWN NOTES

Becket News (by Joan Moylan) In July, the Becket Chimney Corners (camp) invited us to have Pot Luck Lunch with them on the 24th. The food was good and the entertainment was super! The young campers put on dancing and singing performances.

Also in July, we had a representative from Western Mass. Electric speak to our group. She informed us of all the help that is available, and handed out information packets and applications for us to fill out. All in all, it was a great informative afternoon.

Our new Town Manager, **Tony Blair** and our First Selectman, George Fuller paid a visit. Tony told us a little about himself; he lives in Gt. Barrington, MA. He was a lawyer for the town of Lee, then became First Selectman for Gt. Barrington. He then told us that he was applying for a Block Grant, and maybe someday down the road the seniors will have senior housing in Becket.

In August, our big trip was to Indian Head Resort in New Hampshire. Everyone had a great time; the food is always so good and plentiful.

In September, Sonny, Claire and I are going to Chicopee, MA to a conference with the King Ward Tour Company. We will be looking for new places to go on day trips and some over-night trips. We always come away with some great ideas.



I can't believe it, but Halloween is just around the corner. We will start planning for our Big Halloween Party; this is one of our best events. We all love to come in costume. Last year, we had a

"stager," and they decorated our senior room with so many scary things. We will once again have prizes and lots of good food.

Margie Ware from Elder Services who heads up the SHINE Program (health insurance counseling) for Berkshire County residents will be coming to talk with the seniors

about some new changes in some of the prescription plans on Oct. 20th. I encourage everyone to attend.

Remember: Third Friday of Every month: Brown Bag Program, and fourth Friday our wonderful Pot Lucks.

News from Peru (From Barbara Lufkin)

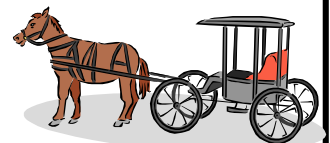
"Do you have access to adequate transportation? Do you understand your health insurance? Is meal preparation or food shopping a problem for you? Would you be interested in unpaid, volunteer work to help others?"

These and other questions will be included in a survey to be sent out by the Peru COA. I am hoping to gather information to help guide the COA in organizing programs, speakers and services for our residents.

I would welcome other residents who might like to help. Several ideas have been mentioned, such as a Breakfast Club, Pot Luck lunches or suppers, cards, a ladies group to do handwork (knitting, etc.), and speakers on health insurance, retirement planning, and grant programs for home repair.

Please watch for the survey in the mail, fill it out and return it to me as soon as you can. If you would like to help, please call me at 655-2592 or the Town Hall at 655-8312.

Chuckle Time.... While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humor, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign... "Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust."



NEWS FROM DALTON



From the Friends of the Dalton COA, Inc.:

The Friends of the Dalton COA is a non-profit group whose focus is to support the work of the COA.

They are holding a quilt raffle with all of the proceeds going toward the purchase of a bench in memory of Pete Bardin. The bench will be located at the Dalton General Store on North Street, one of Pete's favorite haunts.

The quilt is on display in the CRA lobby. Tickets are available through members of the Friends as well at the COA. The drawing will be Sept. 5th.

The Friends are also conducting their annual membership appeal. If you have not received the mailing and would like to join the Friends in their work to support the COA, please contact the COA Office.

Dalton COA News.....

90+ Birthday Party: The annual birthday celebration of our residents who have achieved nine decades (or more) will be held on Thursday, September 24, 2009 beginning at noon in the dining room of Grace Episcopal Church.

The number of folks we have in town in the 90+ range is getting larger! Last year we had 75, and this year we are up to 89, and of these, five are centenarians!

Personal invitations have gone out, so if you are a Dalton resident age 90 or more this year and did not receive an invitation, please contact our office as soon as possible.

Important Vote on the Senior Center Coming Up on September 28th

There will be a Special Town Meeting on Monday, Sept. 28, 2009 at 7 p.m. at WRHS. Among the articles on the warrant is one giving the voters the opportunity to voice their opinion on one of three potential sites for a senior center. The sites

being considered are the DYC, land at Field St. Ext. and High Street (new construction), and at the CRA. All residents are encouraged to attend to make this important decision.

As of this writing, a Public Information Meeting will be held on September 17th at 7 p.m. at Town Hall in the Callahan Room. Architect Dennis Adler and the Feasibility Committee will make the presentation.

On September 9th, members of the Feasibility Study Committee and Hill architect Dennis Adler will attend the COA board meeting to present information on two of the proposed sites and to solicit input from the board members.

The following evening at 4:30 p.m. in the Callahan Room, the Feasibility Committee will meet to come to a decision which they will present to the Select Board at their Monday, September 14th meeting.

All of these dates offer opportunities for voters to learn about the project, ask questions and express their opinions.

Bridges: An Intergenerational Adventure

On Friday, September 18th, we will begin "exploring aging" with the 4th and 5th grade students at St. Agnes School. For one hour each of the seven weeks, such topics as "Ethnicities, Traditions and Heirlooms" - "Aging and Health" - "Learning from One Another" will be discussed in small groups with the students.

Having participated in Bridges last fall, I can enthusiastically say that this is one the best intergenerational programs out there.

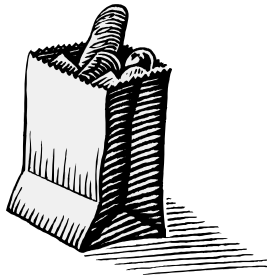
If you would like to know more, please give Sue a call at the COA Office, 684-2000 by September 10th.



“SNAP” (And We Don’t Mean Peas!)

(Information on flyers we received here at the COA.)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps low income individuals and families buy healthy, nutritious food. You may be eligible for SNAP—read on to learn more!



Seniors can apply for SNAP benefits using a shorter form. The Elder SNAP Application has fewer questions and is easier to read. Next, a SNAP case manager will call you to schedule an interview to talk to you about your application. **(Please be sure to put your telephone number on the SNAP application).**

Any proofs that your case manager asks for such as something with your name and address, your Social Security Number and medical bills, can be mailed to your SNAP case manager after your interview.

Can I Own Property and Still Apply for SNAP? You can own your own home, personal belongings, car and have money in the bank.

If you are a senior living alone and your total (gross) monthly income is \$1,805 or less, you will not be required to provide information and proofs for your household resources, such as your bank account or other items or value.

If you are a senior living with your spouse and

your total combined (gross) monthly income is higher than the amounts listed above, you will have a \$3,000 limit on the household resources you can own and still be able to get SNAP. This means you will be asked to provide information and proofs for your household resources.

You do not need to visit the SNAP Office to apply. You can mail, fax or drop off your finished application at the Department of Transitional Assistance Office that serves your city or town. [In Pittsfield, the DTA is located in the Clock Tower building on Church Street.]

Important: Staff at Councils on Aging, Senior Housing Developments, health centers and other community organizations can help you apply for SNAP benefits.

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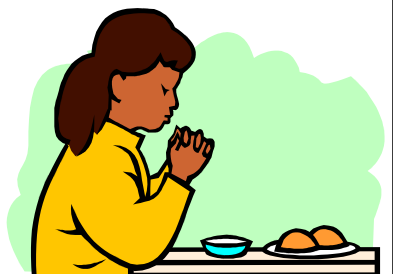
Post Script from Pattie: This can be confusing, so we’d like to offer clarification. Actual eligibility is determined using a calculation for various expenses. These expenses may include but are not limited to doctor visits, travel to medical appointments, medical equipment, shelter (other than subsidized housing), dependent care and child support. Final deductions must bring income levels to \$867/month or lower per person.

|          |               |                  |
|----------|---------------|------------------|
| Example: | Total income: | \$1224.00        |
|          | Deductions:   | <u>\$ 422.00</u> |

Countable Income: \$ 802.00

As long as assets are below \$1805.00, there will be no need to provide proof of resources such as bank accounts, etc.

**CHUCKLE TIME.....** A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she said to their six-year old daughter, “Would you like to do the blessing?” “I wouldn’t know what to say,” the girl replied. “Just say what you hear Mommy say,” the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, “Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?”



## Dalton Police to offer "Citizens' Police Academy"

The Dalton Police Department is very interested in holding a second Citizens' Police Academy. This is an excellent crime prevention tool that focuses on community education and partnership; Citizen Police Academies offer people an opportunity to hear about the inner workings of law enforcement and the departments that serve their surrounding communities.

### Specifications:

1. Length of an academy will be 8 weeks.
2. The targeted start date is Tuesday, September 15, 2009.
3. Classes will be held every Tuesday night from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
4. All attendees will be pre-screened for substantial criminal records.

5. Topics will include Defensive Tactics, Drug Identification, Crime Scene Fingerprinting, Motor Vehicle Stops, Sex Offender Registry and related crimes, and Gangs.

Instructors from the Dalton Police Department, Berkshire County Drug Task Force/Mass State Police and Pittsfield Police Department will give hands on training.

If you would like more information or are interested in attending, please contact Sgt. Jeffrey Coe or Officer Jonathan Bishop, our Dalton Triad officers at 684-0300.



### Councils on Aging Receive Grants

Councils on Aging across the Commonwealth were recently notified that they would be receiving state grants through the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to support their programs.

Our thanks go to State Rep. Denis Guyer, Senator Benjamin Downing and Governor Patrick for their support of the councils on aging and the work we do in our communities.

These Formula Grants—calculated on a "formula" based on the number of residents age 60 and older according to the last Federal Census—is often the main source of financial support for the COA's in very small communities. Applications must be approved before funding is awarded.

Dalton utilizes the majority of its grant to supplement town funding in order to maintain a five day office schedule. A total of 11.5 hours/week is for office staff and the van program. Remaining funds cover the annual maintenance agreement for the COA specialized reporting software and support some of the expense associated with the printing of the Silver Banner newsletter.

### SafeLink Wireless

We have been hearing a lot lately about the free government-supported cell phone program called SafeLink. Reports from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs state that the program appears to be a legitimate service (not a scam of any kind), although folks have identified the problem that you can't get SafeLink if you already have Lifeline for a phone in the house.

Also, if there are several people at one address who apply for the service, SafeLink allows only one phone per address.

*From SafeLink: If you participate in a government assistance program or fall under certain yearly household income, and are located in our coverage area, you could be eligible for a free SafeLink Wireless phone and free monthly minutes. The program is limited to one phone per household, no credit report is necessary, no contracts are required and you will never get an invoice or bill. Check the eligibility requirements on-line at [SafeLink.com](http://SafeLink.com) or call 1-800-SafeLink.*





# An Important Time of the Year for Those on Medicare

If you have Medicare, before long you will be getting important information from your Prescription Drug Plan, your Medicare Health Plan, and/or Prescription Advantage (if you are a member). It is very important to read the letter and understand the information they contain.

## **DO NOT IGNORE ANY LETTERS FROM YOUR PLANS!**

During the annual Medicare Open Enrollment (November 15–December 31), you will have a chance to CHANGE your coverage for next year. Our state-certified SHINE (Medicare) Counselors can help you understand your plan changes, as well as other options you may have.

## **SAVE THE LETTERS FROM YOUR PLANS!**

To schedule a FREE appointment with a SHINE Counselor, Dalton residents can call the Dalton COA at 684-2000. Outside of Dalton, call Elder Services at 499-0524 (800-544-5242).

Public presentations outlining the new changes will be held throughout the county. In Dalton, Pattie has tentatively scheduled a program on Thursday, November 5th at 10 AM. Seating is limited, so reservations are necessary. Please call 684-2000 for information.



## **Health Tip: Longevity**

A recent article in the Baltimore Sun ([www.baltimoresun.com](http://www.baltimoresun.com)) reports that the biggest factor that determines how well you age is not your genes but how well you live. A new study published in the British Medical Journal of 20,000 British folks shows that you can cut your risk of having a stroke in half by doing the following four things: being active for 30 minutes a day, eating five daily servings of fruits and vegetables, and avoiding cigarettes and excess alcohol.

The U.S. News and World Report cites 10 health habits that will help you to live to 100:

1. Don't retire
2. Floss every day
3. Move around
4. Eat a fiber-rich cereal for breakfast
5. Get at least six hours of shut-eye
6. Consume whole foods, not supplements
7. Be less neurotic
8. Live like a Seventh Day Adventist
9. Be a creature of habit
10. Stay connected

## **DALTON TRIAD**

Triad is a three-way commitment among the local Police Dept., Sheriff and older or retired leaders. They agree to work together to reduce the criminal victimization of the elderly and enhance the delivery of law enforcement services to older persons.

A major purpose of Triad is to develop, expand and implement effective crime prevention and education programs for older community members. (Note: See "Citizen's Police Academy" article on page 5).

Dalton Triad meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. at the Dalton VFW. The group receives crime updates from both the Dalton Police Dept. and Sheriff's Office. Speakers are planned offering information on a variety of topics.

The education Triad members receive enables them to become additional eyes and ears for our Police Dept. to help keep our town safe. We encourage you to attend an upcoming meeting to learn more.

## ELDER SERVICES - Caregiver Support Groups

Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc. provides caregiver services through the Family Caregiver Support Program. Caregiver Coordinators are available to provide information and support to caregivers caring for someone over the age of 60. Individual appointments are available. Caregivers are also welcome to attend support groups. All services, including individual appointments and group sessions, are opportunities for caregivers to discuss caregiver issues and to obtain valuable information on resources available in Berkshire County. There is no charge for these services.

There are three support/sharing groups for caregivers at Elder Services. The daytime groups meet from 10 to 11:30 a.m. A "Gentlemen's Group" meets on the second Tuesday and the meeting on the fourth Tuesday is open to all caregivers.

The evening group takes place on the second Wednesday of the month from 6:30 to 8 p.m. and it too is open to all caregivers.

Another group called, "Chicken Soup for Caregivers" is a collaboration with the Pitts-

field Council on Aging and is held on the second Wednesday from 11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Froio Center, 330 North St., Pittsfield. Lunch is available and registration is required by calling 499-9346.

These support/sharing groups provide caregivers with an opportunity to discuss stresses and issues concerning their caregiver role in a relaxed and confidential environment. Many times those who attend find that they help each other by discussing their own experiences and sharing "caregiver tips" on certain issues. New members are always welcome. Facilitators from ESBC are Bea Cowlin and Pat Morrissey, both licensed social workers.

For further information on the Family Caregiver Support program, contact Elder Services' Information & Referral department at 413-499-0524 or 800-544-5242, or email us at [care-giver@esbci.org](mailto:care-giver@esbci.org).



## **Sebastiano "Busty" Giansiracusa Washington's Oldest Resident**

At the June 10th annual Washington COA Open House that was held in the Town Hall, a replica of the Boston Post Cane was presented to Sebastiano "Busty" Giansiracusa—the oldest resident of the town. He also received a certificate of congratulations from the State of Massachusetts, and from the Town of Washington.

Approximately 30 people attended the luncheon at which Busty and three other residents—all octogenarians received recognition.

Busty is a long time town resident and served on several town boards and committees.

The original Boston Post Cane—ebony with a 24 KT gold top was presented to the town in 1909 by the Boston Post Cane Co. to be awarded to the eldest resident, and then passed along. Eventually, the cane was lost.

When former Washington resident, W. "Butch" Cadman (who now lives in the Evington, VA area) learned from his parents, Wilfred and Joan Cadman that the original cane could not be found, he located a company that makes replicas of the cane and decided to purchase one and donate it to the town. Butch wishes Busty and the others that follow him long and healthy lives.

*(Submitted by Joan Cadman, Washington COA)*

Phone: 413-684-2000  
Fax: 413-684-4033  
Email: dcoa@bcn.net

400 Main Street  
Dalton, MA 01226

HILLTOWN ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS ON  
AGING, INC.

*Marcia Brophy, Dalton  
Helga Knapp, Dalton  
Sonny Nelson, Becket  
Joan Moylan, Becket  
Barbara Lufkin, Peru*

**Board of Directors**

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## **PROGRAMS & EVENTS IN DALTON:**

**FOOT CLINICS:** 9-4 at the DALTON CRA on Sept. 22 & 29; Nov. 24th. Call the COA to book an appointment. Fee.

**BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC:** Third Thursday at Grace Church, 10:30 am to noon.

**OIL PAINTING CLASSES:** Tuesdays, 12:30-3 PM at Dalton CRA. Instruction Fee.

**LUNCHESES:** Mondays and Thursdays at noon, Grace Church Guild Hall. Make your reservation at least 24 hours ahead.

**"VETERAN OF THE WEEK"**, from the Veteran's History Project shown Saturdays on Channel 16, Warner Cable.

**MAH JONGG**—Fridays from 10:15 AM to 12:30 PM. Come and learn, or organize a table of your experienced friends to play. For information, call 684-2000.

**FREE TO A GOOD HOME:** Large bag of clean, new (fine) crochet cotton. Call 684-2000.

## **"BREAKFAST CLUB"**

Who doesn't like a yummy breakfast with a very social group of people? This popular monthly event is held in the lobby of the CRA and includes a walk (indoors in the bad weather), breakfast and a speaker or other program. Upcoming Friday dates are: Sept. 25th (Speaker: Kathy Mickle—"Safety in the Home"), October 30th (program tba) and December 4th (Christmas Craft). Call 684-2000 early to make your reservation.



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ATTENTION ALL DALTON VAN RIDERS: Medical appointments and shopping trips can be scheduled Monday through Thursday. We do ask that you make no appointments later than 2:30 p.m.